

Who should manage public housing ?

Report of a workshop held at
Pointe-Claire, Quebec, June 19-21, 1970.

Canadian Council on Social Development
(formerly the Canadian Welfare Council)
55 Parkdale Avenue, Ottawa 3, Canada

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A Project of the
Canadian Council on Social Development
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FOREWORD

The idea that the residents of public housing should take a hand in its management is relatively new. Only a very few years ago the notion would have been scoffed at by managers and tenants alike; however such is the tenor of the times that the concept of participatory democracy has emerged from college campuses to become a significant force in the working of institutions which manage everyday affairs.

This is a report of how thirty managers and tenants went about considering how and to what degree public housing projects could be made self-governing. We met, under the auspices of the Canadian Welfare Council, in the retreat house of the Soeurs de la Congrégation de Notre Dame at Pointe-Claire, Quebec, June 19 - 21, 1970.

The Canadian Welfare Council considers tenant participation to be a concept which could do much to improve the management-tenant relations in public housing. The Council's policy statements have over the years given strong support to public housing as being an appropriate way of providing decent and reasonably priced accommodation for people of moderate means. But it has been recognized that the design and management of public housing cannot escape criticism. To this end, the Council has worked for the incorporation of more community facilities in public housing developments, as well as a more social orientation on the part of management.

In a statement, that was subsequently endorsed by the Canadian Welfare Council Executive Committee, the CWC Housing Committee went on record, in April 1970, as favouring tenant participation in housing management as a desirable objective which should be fostered by public programs. To promote the concept, the Council decided to sponsor two workshops to which would be invited both management officials and tenant leaders.

The objectives the Council set for the workshops were as follows:

- 1) To provide management officials and tenant leaders with an opportunity to discuss together the subject of tenant participation in management.

- 2) To review current Canadian and U.S. examples of tenant participation.
- 3) To delineate areas for tenant participation.
- 4) To identify possible models for tenant participation.
- 5) To identify ways and means through which current policies and procedures might be adapted to provide for participation.

The proposal for the workshop was taken to the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation for funding. There it received an enthusiastic response, the Honourable Robert Andras, Minister Responsible for Housing, having on a number of occasions indicated his interest in examining how tenant participation could be made real. In his public housing guidelines statement in the House of Commons on April 21, 1970, the Minister said:

Another factor that has been under consideration is the whole question of tenant organization and involvement in the management of public housing. We are quite prepared to encourage this sort of thing as a matter of social justice, and we think in turn it will encourage a much healthier outlook and climate all round and remove a major cause of some of the difficulties. Along that line, CMHC has funded a series of seminars on tenant participation through the Canadian Welfare Council which will identify the principles and problems involved.

Actual preparation for the Pointe-Claire workshop was done by a planning committee composed of:

Dr. Marvin Lipman, Advisory Group, CMHC (Chairman)
Madame Jean-Paul Bondu, St-Martin's Blocks Committee
Robert Chagnon, Quebec Housing Corporation
Mrs. Virginia Forgie, Ontario Federation of Citizens Associations
Robert Riggs, Deputy Managing Director (Property Management),
Ontario Housing Corporation

It was decided that an equal number of management officials and tenant leaders should be invited. Management representatives were named by the provincial housing corporations, while the tenant leaders were selected by existing public housing tenant groups.

MODERATOR

GUY BEAUGRAND-CHAMPAGNE, Société de Mathématiques Appliquées, Montreal.

RESOURCE PEOPLE

MRS. DOROTHY THOMAS, Tenant Management Committee, Little Mountain Housing Project, Vancouver.

EDWARD WHITE Jr., Executive Director, New Haven Housing Authority, U.S.A.

PARTICIPANTS

HAROLD ANDERSON, President, Sydney Tenants Association, Sydney

CLAUDE BARRIÈRE, Manager, St-Martin's Blocks, Montreal

MRS. MARIE CAYER, Low Income Citizens Group, Montreal

DONALD DAVIS, Chairman, Ontario Federation of Citizens Associations, Toronto

E. EDMONDS, Manager, Moncton Housing Authority, Moncton

GÉRARD FONTAINE, Tenants Committee, St-Jérôme

MRS. VIRGINIA FORGIE, Ontario Federation of Citizens Associations, Scarborough

MRS. THERESE FORQUET, St-Martin's Blocks Committee, Montreal

BERNARD GALARNEAU, Assistant-Director, Housing Service, Montreal

GEORGE HAYWARD, Assistant Director, Field Services, Nova Scotia Housing Commission, Halifax

D. HOLLETT, Regional Manager, Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation, Marystown

ARTHUR HUGHES, Director of Housing Administration and Urban Renewal, New Brunswick Housing Corporation, Fredericton

JEAN-PAUL LABELLE, Adjoint au Président, Représentant de la Société d'Habitation du Québec, Québec

PETER LAWRENCE, Interim Chairman, Ottawa Tenant Council of Public Housing, Ottawa

MRS. JOAN LORRIMER, Zone Chairman, Association of Ontario Housing Authorities, Brockville

MISS LINDA MARTIN, Prince Edward Island Tenants Union, Charlottetown

MAURICE MATTE, Municipal Housing Bureau, St-Jérôme

BUDD McCORMICK, President, Regent Park Community Improvement Association, Toronto

ANTHONY McGLYNN, Ottawa Tenant Council of Public Housing, Ottawa

W. McLAUGHLIN, Manager, Brantford Housing Authority, Brantford

MRS. B. MEREDITH, Director, Community Relations, Ontario Housing
Corporation, Toronto

HUGH MILROY, Regional Manager, Nova Scotia Housing Commission, Halifax

ROBERT O'NEILL, President, Edgely Village Tenant Association, Toronto

ANDRÉ PAUL, Social Animator, Société de Service social aux Familles, Montreal

MRS. NANCY REID, Executive Secretary, Crescent Valley Tenants Association,
Saint John

DOUG SKINNER, Uniacke Square Project, Halifax

LEONARD SMITH, Tenant Organizer, Halifax

ARCHIE STRATTON, President, Jane Street Tenants Association, North York

WORKSHOP DIRECTOR

MICHAEL AUDAIN, Consultant on Housing, Canadian Welfare Council

FIRST PLENARY SESSION, JUNE 19, 7.30 P.M.

Michael Audain, Workshop⁴ Director

You will see that a simple program has been planned. We hope that the structure will be exceedingly flexible; we want it to serve us, rather than the other way around.

We do, however, have certain objectives for our meeting. These were discussed and approved by the Planning Committee.

The first is to provide management officials and tenant leaders an opportunity to discuss the subject of tenant participation in housing management. This is an opportunity for open and frank discussion.

We are also here to review some examples of tenant participation in housing management both in Canada and in the United States. There are resource people here who can help us do that, and they will be identified later.

We will attempt to delineate areas for tenant participation, and by that I mean areas such as maintenance, tenant selection, or control and supervision of public space in housing developments.

We are also here to discuss possible models for tenant participation. As our discussion progresses, different kinds of models will be identified such as tenant associations, tenant advisory committees and other types of participation in the management process.

We plan also to identify ways and means through which current ways of doing things, policies and procedures, might be adapted to provide and foster tenant participation.

These, then, are the objectives that have been set out by the Workshop Planning Committee. But, I am sure that you will want to review them and discuss their suitability and possibilities.

Your moderator, Monsieur Guy Beaugrand-Champagne, works for the Société de Mathématiques Appliquées, which is a consulting firm in Montreal. He has wide experience in the areas of industrial relations, adult education and social animation.

Guy Beaugrand-Champagne, Moderator

I think that we could begin by introducing ourselves and, at the same time, stating what sort of expectations we have about this workshop. What sort of image do you have of the workshop? What sort of subjects do you think that we should deal with and how should we go about it?

Michael Audain said that this Canadian Welfare Council project is being financially supported by the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation. Perhaps, we should ask, 'Why?' Could Dr. Marvin Lipman say what CMHC expects out of the weekend?

Marvin Lipman, Advisory Group, CMHC

Public housing is a program which has been in existence for many years. It has been the major housing program for low-income families in Canada. It's been developed slowly but since 1964, and particularly through the efforts of the Ontario Housing Corporation, it has moved along pretty quickly. In 1967-68, we had a new federal Minister Responsible for Housing, Paul Hellyer.

Mr. Hellyer decided to go across the country with a task force and assess the situation in housing and urban affairs. The task force report said some things about public housing which were not too complimentary. Mr. Hellyer himself felt very much that he would probably like to see little more public housing built, and particularly no large public housing projects.

Shortly after Mr. Hellyer left, Robert Andras came on the scene, the minister presently responsible for housing. He decided that there were too many people who needed the public housing to stop the program. His attitude was: "We will continue the program and see what we can do about some of the problems".

There are four major problem areas, as identified by the housing task force. One has to do with rents, and we recently have seen some changes in the rental income scale. Another is the physical form and design of public housing. I don't know what we see there. The third is concern about social and recreational facilities; here again, in the public housing guidelines, there was some flexibility in terms of what could be done. The fourth problem area has to do with the administration and management of public housing. And this is the area that we are concerned about in this workshop.

This concern has been recognized in two ways. One is to try to develop ways of putting public housing management on more of a professional basis: to improve the quality of management through training and, it is hoped, give it a different kind of status in the long run.

The second way is to look for opportunities in which tenants could take more responsibility for improving and controlling their environment. I read Edward White's paper for this workshop, and he uses the expression "to make each citizen a responsible part of the process that governs his life". That is, I think, very nicely put. In terms of tenants being involved in management and accepting greater responsibility for where they live, it only seems logical that because they live in public housing and because they live in projects, they know what it is like to live there. They know the kinds of things that are needed, the kinds of things that would improve the quality of life; and they can contribute in a constructive way to such improvement. This involvement can range from certain kinds of social programs, organizing a baseball team, to nursery co-operatives or to the actual management of a project by tenants.

This kind of approach is a relatively new concept in Canada. As with anything new, it usually involves change, and change is sometimes very difficult. It is difficult for tenants to the extent that people are now saying you should take more responsibility for where you live and the quality of life that your environment produces. This provides an opportunity to do something about the kind of authority that the public housing agency and public housing management have over tenants' lives. Like opening a door, you get your foot in it a little bit, and sometimes you want to open it up all the way.

From the managers' point of view, they see themselves as responsible for an expensive piece of real estate. I am sure they wonder how much can be passed over to tenants. Can tenants take responsibility for management programs? Perhaps in some peoples' minds, the fact that public housing tenants get the advantage of decent housing at rents that are geared to their incomes means that they really should be thankful, and keep quiet about anything else.

Tenants, as we all know, are organizing and have organized across the country. The fact that they have organized in terms of their concerns about what's happening to their children, their concerns about management policies and practices, is a reality. I don't think we can turn back the clock in any way. In a sense this seminar is an attempt to look at the kind of problems that may be involved when tenants move more into the area of management, both from the tenant's point of view and the manager's point of view.

We don't have to solve anything here. What we have to do is open up the areas of concern, take a look at them, and discuss them. If we can find some resolution... good! But it's not our purpose to come away with a piece of paper saying this is the way you should organize for better tenant-management relations. I think if we could take a look at the kind of issues that are involved, we will have done a great deal. This is really the first formal group that has had an opportunity to do this.

Moderator

Dr. Lipman says we are not here to make decisions but to open up areas of concern, and then possibly build on these, exchange ideas and develop some sorts of hypotheses.

Let's say we devote the evening to identifying your areas of concern, given the topic that we have. With this material, we could then organize a possible program for tomorrow morning, either to discuss some aspects in the larger group or others in sub-groups.

I would like you to state your concerns with the issues but in doing so, introduce yourself, and say what organization you are with. If you are connected with a specific project somewhere, say something about the project in terms of size and complexity, or simplicity, because from one area to the other the models, the situations may be different. This would help us understand the sort of concerns that you may be expressing.

Hugh Milroy, Regional Manager, Nova Scotia Housing Commission, Halifax.

I am with the Nova Scotia Housing Commission and I hope that you didn't expect anybody to arrive from Halifax fully knowledgeable about housing authorities. My only experience with housing authorities has been with some 40 units in Dartmouth. The function of the Housing Commission in Nova Scotia is to create the authority and provide the housing. When the authority is created, it manages the housing.

Moderator

When you approach setting up an authority, do you approach it with certain notions of participation?

Mr. Milroy .

I was not in on the tenant selection, but I do know that for some 40 units in Dartmouth they had 250 applicants. Some were people who were rehoused because of urban renewal, so naturally they got first choice. But while there are problems here in selecting the tenants, we have no problems with the tenants.

Leonard Smith, Tenant Organizer, Halifax

Are you seriously involved, Mr. Milroy, in Halifax public housing?

Hugh Milroy

Not really. There are some 1175 units in Halifax, and I have had little or nothing to do with them. Would Mr. Smith identify himself further? What is his position?

Leonard Smith

I am presently forming a tenants' association with tenants of public housing in the Province of Nova Scotia. I lived in public housing myself in the Halifax area for two years. You said there were no problems with tenants in Dartmouth. There have been many problems with tenants in the Halifax area, to do with management, rent, social services and recreation.

Hugh Milroy

I know that's very true. I know that as far as Dartmouth is concerned the actual management is by a trust company and they have one man who does nothing but listen to complaints. I think this is very good. I can't say whether they act on all the complaints, but at least a tenant will be listened to, which I think is very important.

Robert O'Neill, Chairman, Edgely Village Tenants Association, Toronto.

What I have to say is fairly simple. I am a chairman of a newly-formed tenants association at Edgely Village, which is a new concept in public housing created by Ontario Housing in the northwest area of Toronto.

First, I would like to tell a short story. It's about how a certain rabbi approached his people. The rabbi goes into a tavern, and there's a drunken peasant sitting at the table, supposedly asleep. But as the rabbi comes in, the peasant looks up and he says, "Rabbi, do you love me?" The rabbi says after a little thought -- he didn't want to answer too hastily -- "Yes, certainly, I love you." So the peasant says to him, "Well, what do I need? Do you know what I need?" The rabbi said "No" and left the tavern. The peasant went back to sleep. Obviously the peasant was right. The rabbi didn't know. Obviously, the rabbi didn't love him in these terms.

I am here on a very biased mission to do whatever I can to help the rest of us poor peasants living in Ontario Housing. Not by way of trying to curdle your blood with horrible stories of rats in the slums but by talking about the ordinary common rights and security that we need, to feel comfortable and loved, if you want to use those words. But with a slight difference, you know.

The difference is that we are not a bunch of drunken peasants. We are very, very active and while we may not all have high academic degrees, we are all very concerned about the things that affect us as ordinary poor working people. And if we find that the attitude of the Establishment (I don't like to use this word because it is bandied around a bit too much lately) is such that we find ourselves in the same predicament as the drunken peasant, then we are just going to have to move to get things done by ourselves.

Mrs. Virginia Forgie, Secretary, Ontario Federation of Citizens Associations, Scarborough.

One thing I would like to say about this weekend conference is that it is not strictly poor people any more that are in Ontario Housing. It was started to house people that had nowhere to go, as a temporary sort of a thing until they got on their feet and were able to buy a house or move to something better.

But things have changed considerably in the last little while, and even many middle class people, especially if they have children, do not have any way of purchasing a house or even renting decent accommodation. Therefore, the concept of public housing has changed in that people are moving in and staying as permanent residents. And so, as people find that these rental accommodations are their permanent homes they take more of an interest. It's not just a roof over their heads, it's their home. Therefore they must have more of a say in how the homes are being planned, the type of places in which they are building them, the recreational facilities for children, the schools that are available, the shopping -- the whole area. It's become vital to the people that are living there because they are not just transients. I think this is a very important thing to consider. As people become a little more affluent, and as more middle class people occupy Ontario Housing, they want a definite say in housing and how it is being planned. That's something that I hope will come out of this conference.

D. Hollett, Regional Manager, Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation, Marystown.

I am regional manager in an area that involves many duties. I am directly responsible for 300 subsidized units in central Newfoundland. I might point out that I use the term 'subsidized'. I never say 'public housing'.

There are several things I would like to see discussed here. I think probably the first should be management. In my travels I find that a lot of management personnel have very fixed ideas, and if tenants groups are going to turn into pressure groups and they run into a brick wall, then all will come to naught. I would suggest that there should be some sort of schools or workshops for managers, so that we can really tell each other what we think of ourselves.

Peter Lawrence, President of Pinecrest Tenants Association; Interim Chairman Ottawa Tenant Council of Public Housing, Ottawa.

I think another topic that we should discuss is communications between tenants, their associations, the local housing authority, the Province, CMHC and the federal government. This is a real problem for tenant associations. When you try to form one, you need all the help you can get. If you turn to CMHC, you cannot get anything from them. You go to your local housing authority and they will give you the strict rules and regulations that they have to abide by. You try to go to the Province and you cannot get anywhere.

Mrs. B. Meredith, Director, Community Relations, Ontario Housing Corporation, Toronto.

I guess to many people that are here this evening, I represent the Establishment. However, I am here also because I am extremely interested. I agreed with Mr. Lawrence that communication is most important. I am hopeful that by the time I go home that I can find out where communications are breaking down.

Harold Anderson, President, Sydney Tenants Association, Sydney.

I think we should have an open discussion on limitations on management: How far management can go, what a housing authority management's responsibilities are to the tenants, and what its limitations are.

We have quite a lot of difficulty in our own area on this, and if we can perhaps set up some sort of guidelines it will be of assistance to us all.

Hugh Milroy

I wonder if we could ask what is it these tenants are trying to communicate? Why are they not being answered? It's always been my policy with any staff I have dealt with that everybody has a right to be heard. What is it you are trying to get across?

Peter Lawrence

The communications difficulty is this: if you have a problem that the local tenant associations cannot handle, you should be able to phone up the housing authority and get a 'yes', or 'no', or 'maybe'. Unfortunately, you get more 'maybe's' and more 'no's than you can get 'yes's'.

Hugh Milroy

Are these items of a major nature?

Peter Lawrence

Yes. We are not talking about your toilet being cracked when you move in and how to get it fixed. We are talking about public nuisance. The local housing authority will send you a notice, if you have an animal in the house, for example, to vacate the premises within 15 days. But on the other hand you might live near someone who is living common law, and raising supreme hell, but you can't do anything about it. The local authority will promise to do their best but nothing happens for two years. Where does the tenant association turn? The next step above is the province, but you won't get anywhere there for the simple reason that such a problem is not dealt with at that level. This is the gap.

Another example: shrubs are planted by the local authority, and you question why -- because 15 tenants planted shrubs two years ago, only to have them torn up by the local authority because they were not uniform with the rest of the project. It seems that if you want to plant shrubs you must plant

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This what I am talking about -- communication. You can only go so far and that's to the local housing authority and if they say 'yes', then you accomplish something. If they say 'no', which is 90 per cent of the time, then you try another angle. And it should not be that way, really.

Robert O'Neill

I think one of the biggest things is to remove the blinkers of the bureaucracy that prevent communications between people.

Just a little while ago Mrs. Meredith and I were discussing a very simple problem about a day care nursery that has been built at Edgely Village. It has been built, and it is ready to move in day-care workers for the children, then the children, and so on. But this has not happened. The nursery has been there for three or more months and people are wondering, here is the place for my baby, why can't I take my baby in? It's no good trying to tell the mothers, Mrs. Meredith said, that she has to put it through someone else or that it was passed in Council a year ago, and in Council someone said that he would see what he could do about it, and he said he would tell his friend, who happens to be the architect, who happens to be this, that, and the other.

It's no good telling these peasants, these poor drunken peasants, to try and fathom all this. Most of the people who will give us the answers can't even fathom this one.

At present, this is how it works: we go from here, to here, to here, to here. Everybody has to understand the problem. Now what we are going to do is try to cut these ten stages down to four, and then we can really begin to communicate. This, really, is red tape, bureaucracy, lack of communications.

Don Davis, Chairman, Ontario Federation of Citizens Associations, Toronto.

We have had correspondence and several talks with people from Ontario Housing and we found that answers that come back are very non-committal. We ask them to explain something and we get back an answer which is only half an answer, and which does not really tell us anything.

Another thing about communications is that a tenant association handling grievances continually finds itself as an arbitrator between management and the person who is complaining. The association frequently finds that its hands are tied and it can't do anything.

It is difficult to accept answers from management people who do not recognize tenant associations. You have tenant relations officers who go completely by their tenant handbooks, which recognize only garden clubs and then use this attitude towards the people. No wonder you get a breakdown in communication! And the majority of people can't understand the words that management uses. I think a prime example is our new lease. It was shown to people at the Canadian Conference on Social Welfare and quite a few social workers expressed concern about how Ontario Housing could expect its tenants to understand it when most of them could not.

Leonard Smith

I want to point out another lack of communications which we find in the Sydney area, which as you know is under a very strict housing authority. Due to urban re-development, a lot of low income people are forced into public housing. They are of a very low formal educational standard, you know. If they have an increase in income and the housing authority sends them their new lease they don't have the academic education to figure these sort of things out. They call the local housing authority manager, ask for an explanation, and the answer they get is: 'If you are not satisfied with what we sent you, we have 1500 people waiting to get in. Move the hell out.' You call this communications between management and tenants?

Linda Martin, Chairman of the Tenants Union of Prince Edward Island, Charlottetown.

I'll say something about this communications problem. I think the only way you can solve it is by organization, and I mean organizing people in vast numbers. I don't mean just a tenants association of one little group. Our organization started in the slums and worked right out through to the high-rise apartments. When we want something done we go directly to the government. We had our Rental Accommodations Act passed by going directly to them. Now we want amendments to that Act.

I think the only way you can get anything done is to organize in large numbers, set up your committee, and send your committee to your government. This is the way we solve our problems.

Anthony McGlynn, Ottawa Tenant Council of Public Housing, Ottawa.

I figure that the people who live in public housing projects are from several walks of middle class and lower class life, and living in such close proximity to each other, they have infinitely more effect psychologically upon each other than they would in another community. This is why you get so many confrontations. It arises, I think, from the design of the development.

I think basically the reason that we have public housing is because of the low socio-economic level of Canada in general. There are possibly several thousands of jobs that exist right now where people are being paid very minor salaries in comparison with salaries that are picked up in the States. Because people cannot afford the high rents in areas where there is low industry and high cost of living, they have to seek refuge in public housing projects where rent is geared to their income. But in public housing their ego is sort of stamped and trodden upon because they live in places which look like prison camps. People point their fingers; so there is a stigma involved right away if you live in public housing.

You have this escalating rent scale in a public housing project whereby, as soon as you get a raise at work, the rent goes up. And you are therefore sort of quenched right out of existence as soon as you get a chance to put more money aside.

Archie Stratton, President of the Jane Street Tenants Association, Toronto.

My complaint is about the same as everyone else's - the lack of communications between Ontario Housing and its tenants. One thing is the switchboard at Ontario Housing. You call and leave your number for your area supervisor or your tenants relations officer to call you. Nine times out of ten you never hear from them.

Our building is fairly new. It has 76 suites. Why they built it where it is I don't know, as it's in a bad area for people with children. My five-year-old daughter has to cross five lanes to go to the park or to school. No stores. It doesn't matter which way you go, you have to cross at least four lanes of heavily travelled road. I think this is bad planning on behalf of Ontario Housing and CMHC.

And another thing, it is a fairly new building and yet it is already falling apart at the seams. We have tenants in the building that can see the cement blocks -- the plaster is coming apart. Naturally this happened with settling; but it's taken six months, eight months, ten months to get anything done about it. This should have been done by the construction people.

We had a tenant whose apartment was broken into, and she had no lock on the door until she finally wrote to 'Action Line' to get it put on. This is a lack of communications. I don't know what else you could call it.

Is there not a better system that we could set up between the tenants and Ontario Housing, to get these things done right away?

André Paul, Social Worker, Société de Service social aux Familles, Montreal.

I am a social worker employed by a family service agency. I assist various citizens' committees concerned with housing and urban renewal in Little Burgundy.

I'd better leave the description of the situation in Petite Bourgogne to the civil officials because it is continually changing. Plans, the numbers of houses to be built...these things change from one week to the other. As to our workshop, I think it would be a good idea to discuss communication. But if we don't include in such a discussion the distribution of power (who has the authority to do what), we leave an opening for people in authority to say: "It's not our fault, you didn't call the right place, you didn't talk to the right person, but we'll try to help you."

From the citizens' point of view, I think they want to be able to call and get someone to listen to them. Citizens should know who they have to deal with. This may involve two, three, or four people and their positions in relation to each other. I think a lot of problems would be understood better, though perhaps not solved, if citizens could get in touch with the right people.

Claude Barriere, Manager, St. Martin's Blocks, Montreal.

I agree that communication is important, but I think everybody should be interested in citizen participation and not just communication. I could spend hours on this subject but allow me to mention the direct participation of citizens committees and their representatives on administrative bodies, such as the Executive Council and the Municipal Housing Office.

In Little Burgundy, tenants have had the right to discuss and make suggestions regarding their leases. Many of their suggestions have been implemented. Pilot projects in citizen participation are springing up all over Montreal. These are of particular interest to me because I am responsible for a thousand families in Little Burgundy. The fact that 45 per cent of these people are English-speaking upset the operation of the Coordinating Committee. But with good animators we managed to get over this hurdle. I am a great believer in citizen participation.

Maurice Matte, Member of the Municipal Housing Bureau, St-Jérôme.

Our main preoccupation this weekend should not be the relationship between property owners and municipal offices, or tenants and government organizations. What we should do is get some ideas on how to build towns that are real human communities. With public housing we have been given a rare chance to rebuild, with citizen participation, communities that have ceased to exist. It is in this area my interests lie.

Arthur Hughes, Director of Housing Administration and Urban Renewal, New Brunswick Housing Corporation, Fredericton.

We already have provisions with most of our housing authorities for tenants associations to sit as observers, as non-voting members, and this is why I would

like to enlarge on the composition of our housing authorities and add to it, perhaps at more length tomorrow. A week ago, the Saint John Housing Authority, our provincial corporation, and CMHC met with the tenants association to receive their brief on the rental scale and on specific items of rehabilitation in the project.

Our setup, as far as the housing authorities are concerned, is to have a member of our housing corporation sit on the authority. Also in our agreement with the housing authorities, there is provision for tenant participation.

Mrs. Joan Lorimer, Zone Chairman, Association of Ontario Housing Authorities, Brockville.

I am here to listen and learn. There is, I think, a difference in our area in that we have begun a small authority and have a great many detached units. As yet we do not have a tenants association, but I would like to learn more about it, because I feel it's a useful thing.

Jean-Paul Labelle, Assistant to the President, The Quebec Housing Corporation, Ste-Foy.

As you know, the Quebec Housing Corporation is a relatively new setup, but already we are encountering the same difficulties that have been encountered in other provinces. However, I would draw attention to the fact that structures vary perceptively from one province to the other. For example there is a significant difference between administrative arrangements in Ontario and Quebec. Nevertheless, the same phenomena do crop up, and I want to hear about the actual experiences and problems of other provinces so that we may profit from them.

In Quebec, we believe in the concept of the housing bureau. We recognize that the lines of authority should be clearly drawn so that citizens will know who handles what. We also agree that there should be communication, in the sense of participation, as well as communication of information.

A breakdown of communication isn't always caused by bad intentions, poor delegation of authority, or a too rigid interpretation of rules and regulations. Often it is the result of a lack of information at all levels.

I think it's important that the establishment know a lot about its customers -- if we can call the people in our public housing 'customers'. What are their needs, their problems and their beefs? What can we do to solve them?

It's also important that the 'customers' be aware of the problems of government people at all levels.

There is another kind of communication that has not been mentioned. This is the horizontal communication needed to establish a community. If we are going to build real human cities, we have to see that there is communication, not only vertically from top to bottom, but from bottom to top, and horizontally. So there has to be greater involvement by the entire community in public housing.

Budd McCormick, President, Regent Park Community Improvement Association, Toronto.

In the last¹ city elections, voters were asked if the City of Toronto should amalgamate with Scarborough, Etobicoke and the other boroughs. I voted 'Yes'. But since Ontario Housing has stepped into the picture and has amalgamated all public housing under one roof, I don't want any part of amalgamation, for the simple reason that the offices all went downtown. Now, regardless of what housing project you live in, in Metro Toronto, you have to phone our central maintenance number. When we were under the Toronto Housing Authority we were able to phone our on-site administration office and get service within a day or two. If there were any personal matters, we were able to go to the administration office right on the site, because there was always someone in the office that would be able to pick up the file and give you the answer.

Mrs. Marie Cayer, Low Income Citizens Group, Montreal.

I am working with a low income and welfare citizens' group. And the reason I am here is because people, low income people and welfare citizens, have no voice. They never get any answers. They have no voice because they are afraid. They are afraid of being thrown out because they are living in public housing. And the word public housing reminds me of public assistance, so I don't like that either.

Marvin Lipman

Does it remind you of public libraries?

Mrs. Cayer

No. It doesn't. And it doesn't remind my kids either.

Bernard Galarneau, Assistant Director of Montreal Housing Service, Montreal.

Frankly, I intend to learn all I can at this workshop. We have here tenant representatives, government officials, as well as a few other experts. I hope that we can deal with the real needs of people, so that I may apply what I have learned to the work I am doing.

If during the course of the workshop I can participate in a more positive way by answering your questions, by telling you my limitations and the things I think I can do, I will do so.

JUNE 20, 1970

Editorial Note

Early Saturday morning the workshop participants met in three groups composed of approximately ten members each. The groups had been previously structured to produce a good mix of managers and tenants and participants from various regions.

Guy Beaugrand-Champagne, in giving instructions, reminded participants that amid the expression of grievances last night, it had been recognized that serious communication problems are complicating the decision-making process in public housing. He said that he suspected that a highly centralized administrative structure was responsible for frustrating effective communication, and wondered if this could be countered by providing for tenant involvement and self-determination at the local level.

The Moderator asked the groups to examine not so much specific complaints, although they were useful as illustrative of problems which arose, but to attempt to identify some of the underlying problems of current housing provision.

The groups were requested to select a rapporteur and report back at 11.30 a.m.

11.30 A.M. SECOND PLENARY SESSION

Mrs. B. Meredith, Group 'A'

Basically we discussed communications. We asked tenants what type of problems they wanted to bring to housing authorities and it seemed to be problems about neighbours. We discussed what to do about neighbour problems. Does the responsibility rest with the housing authority, or is it something that the tenants can work out for themselves? If you lived in a private development and you had a neighbour that you didn't care for, how would you handle it?

We also talked about the stigma attached to public housing tenants. Do public housing tenants themselves feel the stigma? What causes the stigma, what's the root of it, and how does it get corrected?

We talked about welfare, recreation, and how to get funds for tenant associations. We did not get very many answers but we certainly got a lot of questions. Communications was mentioned in relation to the residents of areas in which public housing is built.

It was also suggested that perhaps instead of building so many self-contained units, or so many within a small area, that perhaps in older sectors one house, if in a bad state of repair, should be torn down and immediately replaced by another built by a public housing agency.

Where does the tenants' association fit in? Does it take responsibility for handling money for recreation, and does it help raise the money? There were different opinions about what recreational facilities should be standard throughout and built at the outset. One person mentioned social upgrading courses, such as home economics courses and sewing classes. Family service agencies should be part of the development so that tenants would have some place to go immediately to discuss their problems. Others suggested that problems could be discussed with members of the tenants' association who would then take them to the housing authority.

In St-Jérôme, plans were drawn up by an architect and they were presented to the persons living in that neighbourhood asking them to give their opinion on the design of that proposed public housing development. Many of the people who were going to live in it made suggestions. One was that the floors be wooden rather than tiled. This was finally accepted by the local housing authority.

Harold Anderson, Group 'B'

Mrs. Meredith covered many of the matters discussed in our group. The only thing that she didn't mention was that the idea of tenant participation in public housing in Canada is still very young.

It is young as far as the federal government is concerned, and young as far as we are concerned. Whether or not it is going to work itself out as it grows older is going to be another problem. But we discussed what each province is doing and whether or not we are likely to get tenant participation. In this connection, we discussed whether tenant participation would be in a control or advisory capacity. If advisory, how would the process work? If complete control, will we manage and actually select tenants, or what?

There is definitely a decided lack of communication between management and tenants, and a definite lack of recognition of tenant organizations. We felt that tenants, unless they work on a provincial and municipal level, are only wasting their time.

W. McLaughlin, President, Brantford Housing Authority, Brantford.

I would like to add a little to Mr. Anderson's report.

One of the very pertinent questions about tenant participation would seem to be the confidentiality of certain records and statistics. One of our group rather decisively deflated the idea that such information should never be released to tenants. He influenced me greatly on this point by saying that confidential information is certainly not sacrosanct to the administrative body. In fact, the tenants themselves already know far more about the other tenants than the housing authority, and therefore this is not a terribly valid point.

André Paul

One other important matter that was raised in this group concerned the fear that citizens' or tenants' groups will become part of the Establishment. At another point, someone very appropriately asked why tenant associations shouldn't have the right to be as good or as bad as other organizations in the community.

Dr. Lipman, Group 'C'

Much of what has already been reported was discussed in our group, but there are four specific areas that were emphasized.

First, if you listen to some of the concerns of tenants, about the way their projects look, the problems in getting maintenance, the lack of recreation facilities and this kind of thing, you wonder why they don't move out. In our discussion it was recognized that tenants don't have the kinds of choices that very often the middle-income man in private rental accommodations has.

As one person in the group so aptly described it, you move from the slums into public housing and you think it's a dream. You have comfortable accommodations that you never had before, but you pay a price in that you lose certain kinds of freedoms to make decisions over your own life, and you lose the type of self-respect that you had when you lived in the slums. Somebody suggested that the reasons tenants are organizing is that they are trying to gain back this feeling of freedom and self-respect.

The second area was to look at some of the problems of the manager: levels of subsidy, how much money it costs -- these kinds of real concerns -- and the other problems that management faces, such as trying to do your best for families and still running into problems such as having to throw out a tenant who is disturbing the project when nothing else works, and getting your picture in the paper the next day as being a dirty guy for putting a woman with five children out on the street, yet having everybody in the project pleased because this disturbing influence is out. How do you deal with this? We looked at it from a couple of points of view: one had to do with what role tenants could play in helping professional community resources to deal with problem tenants.

The third area we looked at was the kinds of alternatives open to public housing in developing scattered units, non-identifiable in terms of who gets subsidies. The whole business of housing allowances, so that you are subsidizing a family rather than a unit, was also brought up. We talked about the cooperative home ownership programs in Nova Scotia, also the problems of the down payment to buy a home when you just don't have access to credit.

The fourth area we discussed was how far tenants can go in the management role. We decided that, at least in theory, the group was prepared to see tenants go all the way -- to become managers of their own projects. It was recognized

that it's much easier to accomplish this in a small project but that there was no reason why, for instance, in a project the size of Regent Park, that the present management could not work for the tenants' association rather than for the provincial housing corporation. And whether it is tenant selection, rent collection, maintenance administration, grievances, or whatever, the group felt that tenants could take this kind of responsibility; that they may well need some professional help, but that this professional help is now built into the system and could be used for the benefit of the tenants' groups.

Donald Davis

I would like to refer to the first objective of the workshop that says "to provide management officials and tenant leaders with an opportunity to discuss together the subject of tenant participation in management".

I think that tenant participation in management is very important from the tenant's point of view, for the tenant's well-being and for the continuation of a livable, social environment. I think it's important from management's point of view to provide them some assistance in operating public housing. But any discussion of tenant management without authority is just another form of tokenism. Such tokenism could be a real disaster. We have had much talk about people being involved in this and that, and so much of it is turned into just a token representation. I feel that if we have tenant management set up just on an advisory basis, with no authority, it will cause even more bad feeling between tenants and management than already exists.

Mrs. B. Meredith

What I am most concerned about is the stigma connected with public housing. How do you remove the stigma? Do tenants' associations or tenants' groups become involved? Is this a general thing that has to be tackled by municipalities, the province, the press, everybody? Why is a more definite stand not being taken by the people who are having this stigma attached to them because they are public housing tenants?

Peter Lawrence

The reason there is stigma in public housing is because the places are built in concentrated areas. Tenants tend to stay in these areas. They don't go outside. So with all the different debates going on for different types of housing for people of low income, you have to start off with the tenants that live there.

Just because we are living in a square box does not mean we have to put the top on it. If the tenants start to move out of their projects, if they could be integrated with the other areas of the community, then the stigma would go. The rest of the community would not be looking down on you because you would be a participating member. The way it is now, public housing projects are on the other-side-of-the-tracks.

There are a lot of people sitting here who are participating in tenant associations and councils. It is up to us to get our own people moving -- get them off their rear ends -- into the community. As they circulate, fear and stigma go.

Mrs. Marie Cayer

If the projects were not so large, they would not create stigma because tenants would mix with other people in the community. They would not be sticking around by themselves, having dances in the parking lot, etc. If projects were scattered around the city, you would mix with the community, and not be strictly with low-income people or people on social welfare.

Michael Audain

I would like to interject two things here. Two days ago in Toronto, the Canadian Welfare Council sponsored a workshop on the quality of the residential environment. The public housing tenants who attended, and there were a good many of them, surprisingly said that on the whole they would prefer to live with people in a fairly similar income group rather than to be entirely integrated into the community.

I also want to point out that from the point of view of social services, if there's one thing we have found out in the last ten years, it is that unless social services, recreation, counselling, day care, and similar services are made available at the point of need, then there is little likelihood that they will be extensively used.

Something else we might recognize is that some of our existing housing projects are so large that they are really neighbourhoods in themselves. It could therefore be rather academic to argue about integration.

Donald Davis

I am quite concerned with the trend that is becoming apparent because I feel that what we should be discussing is: Do tenants have the basic right to have some responsibility in the running of their housing units? And if so, in what way? And it has nothing to do with how active a tenant's association is or how many houses we have or where these things should be going. These are possible things that tenant management could discuss. But we are avoiding the issue: Do we have the right? Is it workable and how is it workable?

Harold Anderson

I agree with Mr. Davis. I would like to add that tenant participation comes about because of a problem. How do we become active in that problem? How does tenant participation come about? What's our first move? Where do we go from here?

Robert O'Neill

One of the assumptions that you have to accept before you can go to the guy next door to say, "Come on, get off your backside, get away from the TV and come to our tenants association", is that we have a right to certain things. If you are talking about stigma, if you want to get people who live in Ontario Housing to recognize the fact that they are equal citizens in this society, you have to recognize their right to decent housing and to participate in its management.

THIRD PLENARY SESSION, JUNE 20, 1970, 2.00 P.M.

Editorial Note

At the start of this session, the Moderator said that he felt that there had been a fairly good expression of opinion concerning the need for tenant participation. The Moderator then indicated that it was necessary to consider how this concept might be realized in fact.

To start the discussion, the Moderator called upon two resource people to talk about how tenant participation in public housing management was proceeding in their localities.

Mrs. Dorothy Thomas

I would first like to tell you something about the Vancouver Inter-Project Council, the organization that I formerly headed. It was formed three years ago to speak as one voice on matters of general concern to tenants; to establish communications between tenants and management; to offer a channel for management to discuss and interpret housing policies or other matters of mutual interest; to study and take cooperative action towards physical and social improvement in public housing; to conduct a continuous study of rent structures and policies related to public housing in general; and to be informed about housing and participate in all groups concerned with housing.

We found that there was very little written policy concerning the operation of public housing developments in Vancouver. Even though we have been told that some things are policy, we have never been able to find anything written down. We have asked also for the minutes of the B.C. Housing Management Commission, but they don't see fit to release this information.

We went to Vancouver City Council to ask them to support a brief which advocated that a tenant representative be on the B.C. Housing Commission. This tenant would be elected by the Inter-Project Council. The Act setting up the Commission stipulated that the representative from the City should be an employee of the City of Vancouver -- not a tenant. This was the beginning of our efforts to get tenant participation in management.

About six months ago, the newest public housing development in Vancouver was opened, and the manager of the Little Mountain Housing Project was moved to that project. I live in Little Mountain. Mr. Sutherland, who is the general manager of all projects in Vancouver, is a very understanding person and through talking to him we found out that he was also in favour of tenant management. In fact, he suggested that the Little Mountain tenants might start to take over the office duties.

Mr. Sutherland contacted Mrs. Curry, the community development worker in our area, and she approached the Little Mountain Tenants Association with this proposal. We all agreed that we would at least give it a try.

The women selected to work in the office were women that perhaps had taken the Red Door Course -- which is a local community course that gives some knowledge and training about how a community office could operate.

When we took over the office, we found a table, a chair, a telephone, a sun hat and two coat hangers, also two locked drawers with no keys and a sign saying, "I complained because I had no shoes until I met a man who had no feet". We assumed this to be the philosophy of the previous management.

The agreement, to start out with, was to answer the phone and take calls for maintenance. But as time went on, we became more involved with the tenants' needs, such as recreation facilities, and this sort of thing. We were kept busy with all kinds of funny complaints. It took some time for the rest of the tenants to get used to having no manager. We keep the office open five days a week, and we have a weekly meeting of the office staff.

The general manager, Mr. Sutherland, is invited to some of these meetings, when we come up with a problem that we just see no way of solving. When we have these meetings, we provide our own agenda, and if we have had requests for certain types of things at Little Mountain, these are all listed.

We have had very positive results on some things. For example, we asked for clothes dryers to be placed strategically in the project. Although British Columbia is very beautiful, we have a lot of rain, and in the wintertime

it's hard for people to get their clothes dry. The dryers are being put in now. We also asked if the children in the project could have small caged animals for pets. We had done a survey in the project and found that the majority of people would prefer small, caged animals, rather than cats and dogs running loose and making a nuisance of themselves.

We also received from the Commission permission to open a food co-op store. In the basement of one of our apartment buildings they built a room with tables and shelves, and supplied us with a cash register and an adding machine. They painted it for us and put bars on the windows so that no one could break in. The store is now being staffed by the people of the project.

The Housing Commission also gave us paint to distribute. This may seem like a small item, but people who live in the project had found it very difficult to get paint.

We also got \$300 for sports equipment from the Housing Corporation. Mr. Goodrich, a working man who lives in the project, happens to be interested in teenagers and has taken on the role of a youth worker. We turned this money over to him because he would know best what the kids wanted. We ended up with a pool table, which is in one of the basements of the apartments, a football, softballs, bats, volleyballs, socker balls, tether balls, dart games and some small games.

One of the women on the Management Committee looks after the senior citizens. She makes doctors' appointments, visits them in hospital and arranges funerals.

The six women on the Management Committee receive the Opportunities Allowance paid by the City Welfare Department. It allows \$50 per month for 30 hours of work in the community. One of the things we want to do is to get funds from elsewhere so that tenants who are not on welfare can take part.

We would like the permission of the Housing Commission to collect the rents. We would also like permission to, if not select tenants, at least select accommodation suitable for different families. We have cases such

as the one where a 20-year-old boy going to school is sharing a one-bedroom apartment with his mother. The Children's Aid Society would not allow that, even in a foster home.

We are also negotiating with the Housing Commission to have small yards for the apartments and the row houses. There is enough room so all we have to do is come up with a good plan and some sort of an idea of what type of fences we need.

You may be interested to learn that the Little Mountain Tenants Association is planning a management course in conjunction with the University of B.C. Extension Department. If we can get this course going, it will be a great help in deciding what tenant managementship is, what the limitations are, and how far one can go.

Budd McCormick

How were you accepted by the office staff of the housing project?

Mrs. Thomas

Office staff? We only had one manager. You must understand we are not dealing with anything like Regent Park or Lawrence Heights. We have only 224 family units.

Budd McCormick

Why would you want the responsibility of collecting the rent?

Mrs. Thomas

Why not?

Budd McCormick

By collecting the rent, would you not have on your shoulders the problems about tenants that won't pay their rent right away? If they are your next door neighbours, it could be embarrassing. Why don't you leave that responsibility to the manager?

Mrs. Thomas

Okay. I will try to explain. The manager does not come around and collect the rent at the end of the month. They hire a man who is on a pension to come in for four or five days out of the month and collect the rents. As we are both in the same office when this is going on, isn't it a waste of money? Of course I don't want to put a man out of a job -- that is not the point.

Mrs. Meredith

You also mentioned a Mrs. Curry, a community development worker. Does she guide your program on a day-to-day basis and does she become involved in any of the problems when tenants come to either request advice or assistance?

Mrs. Thomas

Mrs. Curry sits in on our weekly staff meetings. There have been occasions where we have asked for her help because we don't know where to go.

Mr. D. Hollett

I would just like to say that in a new 160-unit development at Marystown, which is a totally integrated subdivision, we have a maintenance man, an inspector, and a secretary living in the subsidized accommodations. This works quite effectively. There are more problems solved after hours than during office hours.

We have an arrangement with all the chartered banks in the province that any tenant can pay his rent to any bank, through a simple rental book. We find that a lot of people respond to this because they are entirely responsible. Nobody knocks on their doors, except when they are in arrears. They take a certain pride in going to the local bank and depositing their rent.

Michael Audain

I would like to ask a question which intrigues me to some extent. How is your management committee accountable to the tenants? How do the tenants really control you in other words?

Mrs. Thomas

Well we have had meetings. We have had two meetings to find out just exactly what the people in Little Mountain think of this arrangement.

There does not seem to be as much tattletaling on one another now as there was when the manager was there. Oddly enough, tenants don't bother us with really trivial complaints, perhaps like they did when they were just speaking to someone on the end of a telephone.

Marvin Lipman

Could you outline some of the social and recreational programs started by Little Mountain tenants?

Mrs. Thomas

I have mentioned the co-op food store. We also have a study club that involves not just the project but also the elementary school in our area. It's a one-to-one tutorial arrangement once a week for children who have learning difficulties at school. We have our fantastic weight-watchers. We couldn't afford to join the regular Weight-Watchers' with a \$2.00 a week fee, so we started our own. We charge 25 cents a week and 25 cents a pound if we gain weight -- so we are all losing!

We have a nursery school. The building itself was donated by the Variety Club and it services the whole neighbourhood, not just the project. The Purple Closet is a popular place for teenagers in the community. It's in the basement of St. Peter's Church. It is run by kids with adult supervision, but they don't look like adults, so it's okay!

Edward White

Generally, when I am out of town, especially with an unfamiliar audience, I prefer to have prepared remarks. I feel a little bit more at home. As it works out, I didn't prepare any remarks and it is just as well that I didn't. A prepared speech would not have been appropriate, as I have learned a great deal about Canadian public housing that I didn't know until I arrived here.

One of the things that I have noticed are the apparently remarkable differences between Canadian and U.S. public housing in terms of the administrative setup. Some of these differences have to do with a much more complex administrative structure in Canada, involving local, possibly regional, provincial, and federal governments, whereas in the States, public housing is organized on simply a local basis and a federal basis. The local basis really is the housing authority itself.

There is no municipal control, once the housing authority is established by the local government or state government through enabling legislation. Perhaps the most startling differences involve the kind of population that you are serving and also the amount of public housing.

From what I gather you only have about 50,000 units of public housing in Canada, whereas in the United States we have some 800,000 units.

We have a longer history, and we also apparently are serving a more complex population composition. We have a pretty obviously different racial composition in most of our projects, excepting the elderly where it is probably pretty comparable. But in family public housing in New Haven, about 80 per cent of our population is black. Perhaps the greatest difference, or another important difference in any case, is the degree of provincial control that exists over public housing in Canada, whereas the major control is local in the U.S.

At the same time, judging especially by the conversation last night and in our workshop groups this morning, whereas the administrative structure may differ, many of the problems are very similar. Last night, for example, it was said there was bad communication between management and tenants in Canada. This is much the same kind of problem which exists in the States presently -- what might be described as the 'communications gap'. I would go further and suggest that what you were really saying is that management, as it is presently constituted, simply is not responsive to what the tenants' needs are.

We tried to get into a definition of just what tenant participation is in our workshop this morning, but I don't know if we have yet defined it concretely here as a group.

It was rather interesting that in our group Mr. Hughes mentioned the fact that in New Brunswick they have tenant participation in the form of legislation which provides that local housing authorities can allow the creation of tenants' associations. This, in my opinion, is not really tenant participation. In fact, it begs the question for legislation to say that you can create a tenants' organization. In the United States, tenants' organizations have been created for years without any legislative consent.

Arthur Hughes

It is not a matter of the New Brunswick government saying that tenant groups can be formed. The actual legislation says that the tenant organizations, when formed, can participate in management. The actual legislation does not stipulate that they can join together as you say. They can do this on their own.

Edward White

Thank you for correcting me, because the way I understood it, it would have perhaps begged the question a little bit.

What I really mean by tenant participation, however, is exactly what you said -- participation in management itself and the whole realm of the decision-making process, including; decisions about budgets, how much will be spent, what it will be spent on, and filling vacant positions on the authority. In fact, the logical conclusion in my opinion, of tenant participation, is to carry it through to the actual ownership of public housing projects.

I would like to now say something about the New Haven model in terms of what we have achieved to date in the area of tenant participation. I would like first to say that we have a long way to go. It is still relatively new to us, but we have done some things.

I think our tenant organizations got started much the way as tenant organizations in Canada, that is, primarily in an advisory capacity, or to fill a void in terms of the type of recreational activities available to public housing tenants. Tenants would get together and pool their resources, ideas, and imaginations to create garden clubs or teen lounge centres. But they complemented the services provided by management; so there was no early conflict. Now, however, tenant organizations have become more concerned about problems such as inadequate maintenance. They have become stronger and are making more demands. For example, they want actual representation on the local boards or commissions which govern public housing. They also demand that tenants be hired to fill vacant positions, even in the maintenance or administrative staff of housing authorities.

The concern which led tenants to become more militant centered around the quality of maintenance. This is a very serious problem in the U.S., because the government has only recently begun to provide even a token form of subsidy for the operational costs of public housing. For years the federal government accepted only the debt service on original construction. All other costs had to be paid out of rent or operating income. As a result, a lot of maintenance was deferred or never done at all. The present condition of projects is probably much poorer than it is here in Canada.

Tenants have become concerned about rental policies. We also have a kind of rent-to-income policy in the States. Tenants are interested in just what level rents should be set at. They also want to have a say in the kind of services that are being provided. They feel that if there is a given amount of money available, they should be involved in deciding how much of it should be spent on maintenance and how much should be spent on, let's say, recreational facilities. We now have two tenant commissioners on our five-man board which sets all of our policies, including rents, budgets, admission policies and so forth. These tenants have been on our board for approximately two years. We are even thinking of adding, with the consent of our local government, a third tenant member, which actually would give the tenants a majority voice in controlling the authority.

We also have begun to hire tenants in large numbers. We have approximately 3,500 units in basically four groups. Each group has about eight or nine hundred units. Two of these groups are managed by tenants, resident there.

In the last 18 months, at the insistence of tenant organizations, we have filled approximately two-thirds of all positions that have become vacant or have been newly created, with tenants. This includes not only maintenance positions but administrative ones as well.

Another direction which tenant participation has taken in New Haven is the development of social programs, responsive to tenant needs. These include teen lounge facilities. We also have a number of child day care centres in New Haven. These programs and other similar ones are all run through tenant organizations. We are fortunate in Connecticut that there is a fair amount of money available from the State to fund operations such as these.

What our housing authority does is to assist a tenants' organization in setting up a non-profit corporation to become the administrator of a particular program. I will use one case in point. At one of our projects in which about 60 per cent of the tenants are on welfare (mothers living alone without men in the home) many of the tenants wanted to get off welfare. But they felt they could not do this without an adequate child care centre to take care of the kids while they were at work or on their training programs. So they established the Martin

Luther King Child Day Care Centre Incorporated. We used our own legal staff to get them incorporated and we assisted them in writing an application to the State of Connecticut for \$50,000 annually to fund the operation.

The money was made available directly to the tenants by the State. They, in turn, took this money and hired staff, rented quarters from the housing authority, refurbished them, and so are actually operating a day care centre which caters to approximately 60 children a day. They set policies in terms of who may be admitted, giving priority to tenants in general and welfare mothers in particular.

We also have, through the Office of Economic Opportunity in Washington, money to hire young adults and teenagers to do various jobs around the projects. This helps us out because the jobs actually are productive. But it is also helpful to the tenants in terms of achieving more upward economic mobility and giving some structure to their lives. The jobs are assigned to tenant organizations, and they, in turn, actually hire the individuals to fill them.

Perhaps the best example I can give of how tenant participation works successfully in New Haven and in many other areas across the country is our so-called "modernization program".

Many of our public housing developments in the States are 20 or 30 years old and are in a serious state of disrepair. In response to this situation, the federal government in the fall of 1967, authorized a \$150 million modernization program to correct things like heating plant deficiencies and other physical plant aspects in need of improvement, including provision of certain amenities that were never included in the first place, such as showers and adequate recreation facilities.

The federal government, however, attached, as a condition to these grants, a stipulation that housing authorities had to obtain meaningful tenant participation in planning programs of modernization.

In New Haven, we have been awarded a \$2,700,000 grant to upgrade 1,600 units. In order to get this, we had to bring tenant organizations into the planning, to the extent that they were actually determining what would be done and in what order. It was agreed that they would be hired to do the work wherever possible.

We developed a 200-page application. But all we really did was type it up, put it in technical language and get it priced out by engineers and architects. The tenants themselves actually decided that they wanted to have modern bathrooms, kitchens, new recreation facilities, and new community space. This program is under way now. I think that perhaps it was the most effective demonstration of tenant organization we have ever had, because they were actually involved in the decision-making process. I might say that they probably planned a better modernization program than we would have, because they had a better idea of their needs than the housing authority.

I would suggest that some of our experiences can be transferred to Canada. They can't be transferred exactly. We have a big advantage. The federal government in the United States apparently exercises much more control over public housing than yours. You have apparently a sympathetic federal government in terms of wanting to foster more tenant participation, but they don't have the leverage that ours does to enforce it.

Leonard Smith

Is your rent scale based on gross wages?

Edward White

It varies from locality to locality. Each local housing authority can set its own rent policy subject only to the ultimate approval of HUD. As a result we have many different schemes. Some authorities have fixed rent policies, where you pay according to unit size. But, the majority have a rent adjustment policy according to a rent-to-income ratio. However, the ratio varies from as little as about 15 per cent up to about 25 per cent of income.

The definition of income itself varies from city to city. In some cities it's practically a gross income but in the vast majority of cities a net income is taken.

Marvin Lipman

It seems to me you said two things that didn't quite agree. One was that you couldn't legislate tenant participation, and then you suggested that tenant participation has more or less been legislated in the federal government in the States.

Edward White

Well, you can't legislate tenant participation but I think you can, through legislation, provide the framework in which it can work. Unfortunately, local housing authorities may not want to do anything to foster tenant participation. But, if the administrative mechanism is unwilling to do it, you can legislate a framework in which tenant participation is possible.

The level of government which controls the purse strings perhaps can say to housing authorities, "As a condition of further subsidies, you must have tenant participation". One is still going to rely largely upon local authorities and tenant organizations to actually bring it about in a meaningful sense. If there is no tenant organization in existence, then clearly you won't have effective tenant participation. If the local authority is unwilling to accept it, it's certainly going to make it harder, if not impossible. In fact, to my knowledge, the best type of tenant participation -- and I think the situation at Little Mountain in Vancouver is a good example -- occurs when the housing authority itself is interested in fostering it, and in fact encourages it.

Marvin Lipman

Mr. White, I think it would be fair to say that in Canada the split is that the federal government controls the purse strings and the provincial government controls the administration of public housing. Anyway, about tokenism. Is it possible for the federal government to say to the provinces, really, "If you want money for public housing, you will have to appoint two tenants to every housing authority board"?

Edward White

I think that if there is local resistance, senior governments, - whether federal or provincial, can make it easier for tenants to get around the obstacles that local officials may create.

Budd McCormick

Do the tenants in New Haven completely run the projects?

Edward White

Yes, they do. We have a central office which does certain things and exercises an overall supervisory function. But, we try to make each management area as autonomous as possible. They have their own budget, and they can even spend outside of their budget under certain situations. They do their own firing and hiring subject only to appeal to the central office.

Budd McCormick

How do tenants react when they are not able to get things done through their neighbours doing the management?

Edward White

Well they are not happy. Of course they still want things done. However, the tenant management people are able to get out and explain in terms that tenants can understand, exactly what the nature of the problem is and what the options are. Our tenant managers have also been able to probably foster much more cooperation from residents in terms of tenant responsibility for maintenance work, such as doing their own yards and sidewalks.

Budd McCormick

Just one more question. How large is your biggest project run by tenants?

Edward White

802 units.

Jean-Paul Labelle

Do you have any management training programs in New Haven?

Edward White

Unfortunately this is one of our weaker areas. It is reflected in the calibre of managers we have now. Basically, they are people who started off at a low level and worked their way up over a period of years. They are never really trained in areas such as social awareness. Nor do we have a training program set up especially for our tenants, either.

There are however, a couple of organizations that have recently begun training programs. Some of you may have heard of Urban America. Since last February, they have been running management training institutes dealing with finances, budgeting, maintenance and social problems. From what I have heard, it's not really as good as it ought to be, so I am not going to send any of my managers to it.

There are also several universities in the States that have become aware of the problems and have set up programs. The University of Illinois, as a matter of fact, has a six-week institute that begins in September. The closest thing to real training in tenant management is taking place in the city of Boston where they have a very large project called Columbia Point. The Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Ford Foundation have provided \$300,000 to support a program of management training for the tenants there. Ultimately the project will be sold to them.

I mentioned one program that we have in the States which I think would be very applicable to Canada. This is an actual tenant ownership. We have a program called Turnkey III in which the local housing authority acquires or constructs some ordinary public housing units. However, instead of just continuing to make renters of the people, they set up an equity account for each tenant.

The operating expenses for each unit might be an average of \$70, let's say. But, instead of charging \$70 rent, they would charge perhaps \$85 or \$90 a month. The excess over the operating expenses goes into the equity account. The local authority, either through its own resources or through the resources of the federal government, also pays off bonds that are floated to acquire the project. When the equity account reaches a point where it is substantial enough to pay off the remaining bonded indebtedness, they pay it off and turn over title of the property to the occupants. It's a method of providing actual home-ownership to low income people. The tenants are especially picked and made aware of the fact that they will come into this property. They therefore treat it as their own house right from the beginning. It might take 15 or 20 years, but it's no worse than paying off a 25- or 30-year mortgage. In the meanwhile, they do as much maintenance on their own as possible in order to reduce operating expenses.

W. McLaughlin

Is there any noticeable change in the level of rental arrears and evictions since you started tenant management?

Edward White

There has been a contradictory experience. Ordinarily, we had a rental policy that prescribed payment no later than the tenth of the month; otherwise automatic eviction proceedings began. At the request of the tenant organizations, we changed our rent payment date from the tenth to the sixteenth and we had a very adverse experience. It contributed to laxity in rent payment practices and to a substantial increase in delinquent rents. Once that was shown to the tenant organizations, though, they themselves immediately asked us to switch it back to the tenth, which we did about nine months ago. There has been, I think, a correlated change in the amount of delinquent rent.

Our evictions, unfortunately, have remained fairly stable. In most cases they concern welfare recipients. However, I think this is more a function of inadequate welfare budgets as families are forced to use rent money to supplement inadequate food allowances. This has changed recently because

now we have been able to get a legislative mandate which instructs the welfare department to make rent payments directly to the local housing authority. Now, we may see a reduction in the number of evictions.

Maurice Matte

One thing that strikes me about the experiences which have been reported is that the kind of participation everyone is looking for is vertical. We are trying to clarify the issues, but I'm not sure that we shouldn't start from the beginning. I'm thinking of people like us who are just starting in the field.

Gérard Fontaine, here at the workshop, is a truck driver. He gets up every morning at six o'clock and returns home at half past seven in the evening, five days a week. If he devotes this weekend to our workshop and he donates his time next week to helping tenants move into one of our projects, he is involved. Now, if he asks something of us at the Municipal Housing Bureau, you can be sure that we will pay attention to his request, because he has done something for others.

If women get together to make curtains with material we provide, if they clean up their houses together before moving in, they become accustomed to working together. We can then give them other responsibilities. For example, they' can be made responsible for regulations covering their projects. As they gradually assume responsibility vis-à-vis their fellow tenants, they can start to take a hand in managing the projects. In the not too distant future they will be running all the municipal housing bureaux.

From the start, there needs to be horizontal communication among citizens whose primary motivation is not demanding or recriminatory. Eventually they will formulate their demands.

André Paul

Might I suggest that management people, after normal working hours, go and play cards with the tenants and join them in recreation. I don't know if that is the mark of a true volunteer, but it's good to do something for others. When I see

young fellows who work all day, and then during the evenings put their trucks at the disposal of others, I begin to wonder if truckers find it easier to work together than administrators.

Maurice Matte

This is not a bad idea. But we already do a lot of voluntary work. I spend 60 hours a week on my job, yet I spend a lot of time at the Housing Bureau for which I receive no remuneration. There are workers in the Bureau who have given up a day's pay of their own accord. Others volunteer to supervise construction sites or give free legal advice. Having said this, I entirely agree with you that the next step is to go and meet people on their own ground.

André Paul

In discussing training courses in public housing management, are we presuming that tenants will fill the supervisory positions? It seems to me that there could be another model in which the manager is a paid specialist under the orders of a tenant committee. The management specialist would carry out the decision of the management committee and help them prepare a budget. Let's suppose courses are necessary, but do we have them for tenants or professional managers? These are two different things.

The fact remains that housing that is owned by a public agency is the financial responsibility of the government. In this context, is it possible for a public agency to make tenants entirely responsible? If this were to happen tenants would be handling public money. But who handles money is not the question. Civil servants, whether they are competent or not, are accountable for their actions. Can tenants be made accountable?

As long as there is a political structure like we have in Montreal, the possibilities for tenant participation lie in cogestion (joint management). It takes two people to produce real cogestion, one with no more power than the other.

At present, when it comes to a choice between red or green doorknobs, it seems you can consult the tenants. But when it comes to hiring two or three new staff, the budget is involved and the municipality no longer permits tenants to make their own decisions. Sometimes they listen to suggestions, sometimes they don't. They make the final decisions. I would like to know if it is possible with the present legislation and distribution of power to talk of tenants really playing a role in decision-making -- unless they own something like the Ford Company and have the money to handle it?

Jean-Paul Labelle

I think Paul just got to the heart of the problem. When we talk about participation, what do we mean? Whether there be a tenants committee or a professional manager at the project or municipal level, can either party hope to have full control and make final decisions? Will they not have to depend on arbitration? When you think of it, there is no organization at any municipal, provincial or federal level which does not have to account for its administration and whose budget is not limited.

If tenants are going to make decisions about housing management, are they going to have all the money they want to spend in any way they want? Right now, no government would go along with this.

I'm quite sure none of us believe that a tenant group or a manager would be able to do as they wish. I'm afraid they will be subject to ordinary controls as is any organization. They'll have to have their budgets approved in the same way as any municipality does.

However, after a clearly defined budget has been approved, there are many ways in which tenants can help decide how it will be spent. But they'll have to work within boundaries that none of us can escape.

Edward White

We always seem to get back to the fear that exists in the minds of some people that tenants are not capable of managing projects properly.

Jean-Paul Labelle

That's not what I said. Do you feel that tenants, if they are given full responsibility, should be held accountable to some authority, whatever it may be?

Edward White

Oh yes. They should be. They should be accountable on the one hand to other tenants, because there would have to be some mechanism for appointing a tenant board of directors. Let's say, if they were not managing properly, they could be recalled. They should also have some accountability to the government which provides subsidies.

Jean-Paul Labelle

I think this should be clearly recognized. Sometimes people suggest that tenants should do what they please. That sort of talk makes managers fearful.

André Paul

I think we shouldn't get involved in a whole lot of useless talk. As an animator with citizens' committees, I am convinced that anyone can do the job if he is given the tools. If not, we will hire people. Tenants can handle it, there is no question of that. But I do doubt that it will ever come about. After all, the Chairman of the Executive Committee of the City of Montreal has said: "Never, but never, will we give up our power". This he said when he decided the composition of the Montreal Housing Bureau, on which there are three administrators and two citizens. Therein lies the basic problem.

What is to be done in the face of this? We thought we were going to have some power but we never got it because of the poor structure. It isn't ability that's at stake here, it's the distribution of power.

Bernard Galarneau

When Mr. Saulnier said that, he added, "under the present structure". He acted in accordance with the existing legislation. The law is clear at the moment. If the law changes, all right. Everything can change.

Moderator

These issues we are now discussing possibly form the crux of the weekend. Let me try to summarize.

Public housing is subsidized by public money with the management accountable to some level of government. The government is responsible to the taxpayers for the administration of funds spent on public housing. For this reason, the spending of these funds is restricted and subject to constraints, obligations, limitations, and controls.

From another point of view, public housing is a service to people and management is responsible to the tenants for the quality of that service. In this sense, housing management must be constantly evaluated to assess whether it is performing in accordance with the objective of providing a good environment.

We've been talking about the possibility of tenant management. The crucial question is this: are tenants really capable, and would they be prepared to take on the job of accounting to government for the distribution of public funds? Is this what tenants mean when they talk about participation? Do they want to take over with full managerial control and be responsible to themselves and the government?

Or are the administrators capable and willing to take on this double responsibility? At what point and under what conditions is it feasible to turn over management to the tenants? Is this what the tenants want, and is it possible?

FOURTH PLENARY SESSION, JUNE 21, 11.50 A.M.

Editorial Note

Most of Sunday morning was occupied with the participants meeting in two separate groups -- one for management officials, and one for tenants. Each group was asked by the Moderator to choose a chairman and consider: to what extent they could take a position on the question of tenant participation in housing management, what degree of participation would be acceptable to the constituencies they represented, and how existing legislation and procedures might be best amended to incorporate tenant participation.

Marvin Lipman (reporting for the managers' group)

Throughout our discussion we struggled with the question of how you represent the public interest in any kind of transfer of control of public management housing to tenants. We started out by considering whether it is possible, given today's political climate, to completely transfer management control to tenants. We came to the decision that it is not possible; that the political climate is such, that the present rules are such, that it is not possible in a complete sense.

On the other hand, we did see it as theoretically possible if certain ground rules are accepted by tenants. These would include, for example, the rent-to-income scale. If this were taken as given, and perhaps other things as well, it might be possible to have a demonstration project in which tenants take the most of the management responsibility. The demonstration might later be moved to the national scene.

We agreed that we need responsive management. We need management that is concerned and will respond to the needs and the desires of tenants. We need more responsive housing authority representation which might include tenants. We recognized that in two provinces at present, it is possible for tenants to be on housing authority boards.

We did, however, agree that there were certain areas where control and responsibility could be given to tenants in a total sense. Among these were social and educational programs which could help tenants move towards greater responsibility. The tenants could take total responsibility for recreational space and activities, as well as common areas in projects.

We got hung-up on the question of maintenance. We took a situation where a project had a tenant group that was prepared to undertake the responsibility of total maintenance for a big building. We recognized that if we gave them a maintenance budget of X number of dollars we would still have to solve the question about how the public interest gets represented in turning this money over to tenants.

It was not a dogmatic discussion in that the group was saying that tenants won't protect the public interest. We simply recognized that as housing administrators we have the responsibility to protect the public interest, and wondered how we could transfer this responsibility in a way that satisfies the public and the governments involved, and insures that tenants will get the kind of service they want.

We also examined some areas of planning and operations policy including the resolution of grievances, the physical design of buildings, admission policies, and rents, to see where tenant participation might be possible. It was generally felt by the group that we wanted participation rather than a transfer of control, but meaningful participation, not just advice. We do not necessarily want to say to the tenants, "You solve the problem". Nor do we want to say, "We want your advice on the problem". We did agree, though, that it would be useful to say, "We want to sit down with you and work out a solution to the problem".

Mrs. Virginia Forgie (reporting for the tenants' group)

I am sure that the managers now expect a confrontation. But what Dr. Lipman said about tenants working together with management is in line with our thinking. We don't want to take over the whole thing -- just 50 per cent tenants on the boards of housing authorities. That way we will be able to present our view and hear what the administrators have to say about budgets and other matters.

Equal representation on the local housing authorities is the first point the tenants wanted me to put to this workshop. We want our people there so we know exactly what is going on.

The second point is that we would like management training programs for tenants, so that they can be trained for jobs as they become available in the housing field.

The third point is that we want tenants to get first priority on vacant jobs at all levels. We have people that are quite able to fill these jobs, so management should, all things being equal, hire a tenant rather than an outsider. There was a point brought up about difficulty with the unions. But this is a thing that has to be worked out; and if we had tenants on the board, we would be able to solve that sort of problem.

Our fourth point is that we want a tenant review board for each project and someone who would carry out liaison with the housing authority and provincial housing corporation.

Robert O'Neill

Just an explanatory point about the liaison function. Basically, we propose that the tenant review board would investigate grievances, and having once established the nature of a grievance, would take it to the housing authority, if it could not settle the matter itself. A liaison person would expediate communication between the tenant review board and the housing authority.

Marvin Lipman

At the risk of playing devil's advocate, it seems to me that all the concern you hear about bureaucracy was not very well dealt with in terms of your proposal for review boards and the like. It seems to me that you are setting up another kind of bureaucracy without taking a great deal of responsibility in terms of work.

Mrs. B. Meredith

In Metro Toronto, all the Ontario Housing Corporation administrative employees are civil servants. Selection is carried out by the Civil Service with people being considered on the basis of their education, and individual qualifications, not according to where they live. Therefore, it would be extremely difficult at the present time to give employment priority to a tenant.

Mrs. Virginia Forgie

Once tenants are on Ontario Housing's board of directors, surely the laws could be changed to give tenants priority?

Edward White

I would like to comment briefly on both points raised in response to the tenants' report. First, we accepted it as given that tenants were not satisfied with the present bureaucratic structure administering public housing in Canada; that it generally was not as responsive as it should be to the needs of tenants. We also accepted as given that the only method of changing the administrative structure to make it more responsive was to involve tenants in it. We defined participation as control or power. That is why our first demand was that tenants be given at least equal representation on boards.

The other things are corollary to that, for example, in terms of employment. I don't believe that existing civil service procedures would be a major problem, because we have similar requirements in the States. In spite of those, we have been able to develop administrative procedures that allow hiring tenants.

The key thing in response to Dr. Lipman's point is that we are not just trying to set up another bureaucratic structure or add to the existing ones. We are trying to change the bureaucratic structure so that it will be responsive to tenant needs. The only way this can be done is by putting tenants in positions of power on boards that make decisions on budgets and other important matters.

George Hayward

As an administrator, I would like to see 49 per cent tenants on any board and 51 per cent manager, because management is responsible for the creation and funding of housing projects. I also agree with Dr. Lipman that tenants seem to be asking for authority without accepting too much responsibility.

Mr. Galarneau

My question is somewhat related to your remark. If it is a fifty-fifty representation, who is going to take the decision in case of a deadlock?

André Paul

This is a basic problem. Democracy being reduced to a majority of one is the cause of a great many problems.

We live under a democratic system. I feel free to discuss it because it wasn't I who chose this system. This democracy every four years or so delegates power to a government. But the fact remains that the power that government exercises is delegated by the citizenry.

When tenants in public housing demand their rights, they are citizens asking to be given the same rights and freedoms as other groups in society. I see no reason to reduce their authority to decisions no more important than deciding what colour the inside of their houses will be.

Why decide at a given moment that the only thing the tenants are going to be allowed to decide is the colour of paint? The managers' report appears to limit tenant control to recreation areas.

But I see no reason why tenants shouldn't be given a maximum of authority. For example, with regard to the project budget, when it has been approved by the City of Montreal, why shouldn't the tenants distribute it as they see fit. They have the right to be as good or bad as any professional manager. When people say that this would be like setting up another bureaucracy, one fact shouldn't be overlooked: the present bureaucracy is accountable to the Mayor and the Aldermen, while the bureaucracy that we are talking about setting up would be accountable to the tenants, because it would be elected by the tenants.

Mrs. B. Meredith

I must remind you that civil servants are accountable to the public. When Ontario Housing's estimates are before the legislature, the civil servants who administer housing are required to answer every question about how the Corporation is run. So we are the ones who have to answer to the public.

Don Davis

I want to react to a statement made by Dr. Lipman for the management group. This was his reference to a delegation of power and authority in regard to recreation. I suggest to him and the other managers that they are delegating authority which they don't have. It's our basic right to decide whether or not we want to have any social or recreational programs in our community, and it has nothing to do with housing management.

Michael Audain

Yes, I was struck by the generosity of the management group in offering tenants full control over aspects of social services, recreation, and community facilities, which housing managers really don't have much responsibility for in the first place. These matters are the concern of a great many community agencies and groups.

Also, I would like to say that I am disappointed the managers' group could not apparently agree to even token tenant representation on housing authorities. I think one of the wonderful characteristics of Canada is that our ways of doing things vary enormously from region to region. But I do find it extremely strange that the federal government has a program of public housing called Northern Rental Housing in which the complete administration at the local level is delegated to housing associations elected directly by the tenants. These associations carry out maintenance under annual service contracts, tenant selection, and administration of a rent-to-income scale. Certainly they are performing pretty well all the aspects of management that a housing authority performs in our urban areas. This model apparently works for Indians and Eskimos, so why cannot it be applied in the urban areas of Canada?

Dr. Lipman

I agree that we were attempting to formalize a right that tenants have already in relation to social and recreational facilities; but this subject receives a lot of attention from tenants' groups across the country as though it were a responsibility of government or housing management to somehow produce these kinds of things. You are absolutely right. All we are doing is saying that we recognize it.

Regarding the question of tenant representation on housing authorities, I suspect that the biggest question we had was about whether it should be legislated. There was no concern about tenant representation on housing authority boards. We would like to see how it could be worked out in a meaningful way other than through a piece of legislation.

Michael Audain

I think it is a substantial breakthrough if we can take it that the managers were in favour in principle of tenant participation on the boards of housing authorities. I take it that they were?

Marvin Lipman

Yes.

Michael Audain

Did any members of your group disagree?

Marvin Lipman

I think there was general consensus in the group on this point. We had a lot of disagreement, and it was not an easy discussion, but I think we tried to be honest.

André Paul

I don't want to give the Montreal authorities any more credit than I have to, all the same some things are happening.

For example, concerning fear about the division of management-tenant authority, I know that there has been a meeting at the Housing Bureau when only one municipal official and two citizen representatives* were present. Together they constituted a quorum and voted but I don't think the tenants were too wicked! If the present laws in certain provinces do not allow this sort of thing, the laws can be changed. But first, the principle of citizen participation has to be accepted.

When tenants ask to have some internal authority with regard to the management of housing projects, they don't get far but gradually they are getting more say. I don't think management objects too strenuously to doing this thing, so long as they are not forced to overstep their budgets.

What the tenants here are asking for isn't some futuristic thing which would require the rewriting of all Canadian legislation. Their demands are within reason and it would be stupid to ignore them.

* The "citizen representatives" who are appointees of the City of Montreal are not public housing tenants.

FIFTH PLENARY SESSION, JUNE 21, 2.30 P.M.

This concluding plenary session was preceded by the playing of a video tape dialogue between a tenant playing the manager role and a manager taking the part of a tenant. This provoked a hilarious atmosphere as participants responded to the absurd stereotypes so effectively portrayed.

A good portion of the session was taken up with an "off the record" discussion led by Marvin Lipman concerning the consideration the federal government was presently giving to the provision of financial grants to tenant associations.

W. McLaughlin

I would like to clear up a point that I think not everybody understands. It concerns the fundamental question of tenant participation in housing authorities. It would appear that a fairly evident and quite legitimate attempt has been made to convince management people that tenant participation on housing authorities is a valid and a good idea. There is no objection to this. But I think the preaching is being done to the wrong congregation.

In Ontario, selection of housing authority boards is delegated to a committee of three in each municipality where a housing authority exists. On this committee is a representative of the municipality, usually the mayor, a representative of the federal minister responsible for housing, and a representative for the provincial minister responsible for housing. There is no legal barrier of any kind which prevents this committee from appointing a tenant. The legislation simply calls for the appointment of a responsible citizen who could be of value in assisting the operation of the authority.

Therefore, it would seem to me that the appeal should be made to Members of Parliament and to mayors, rather than to members of a housing authority, or provincial officials. These are the people who can implement your request, not us.

By accepting Dr. Lipman's report on our discussion, we have implicitly implied that as management people we are not going to object should the committee of three choose a tenant. But, this matter is not within the jurisdiction of anyone that I am aware of in this gathering today.

I think there was a substantial amount of agreement here today. Indeed, there was a substantial breakthrough. Mr. Audain noticed this immediately this morning. I think you have gone a long way in convincing us that tenant participation might be a valid thing.

I would also like to say that I hope one of the major developments from this weekend is that we, who represent the management group, have really enjoyed meeting you people who are tenants. We think you are a very responsible group with a strong point of view that has been well represented. I hope there is mutual agreement that we are not the ogres that we might have appeared to be on the surface, and that we will have further discussions along these lines.

Peter Lawrence

I think we have learnt a lot. We have also discussed things that all tenants have had on their minds for years. We have certainly got a taste of what we are up against when we talk about tenant participation. No doubt we need more meetings along these lines. We really have not solved anything at this conference, but I don't think that was the main purpose. We have, however, solved the communication problem to some extent.

Bernard Galarneau

I would like to put forward a definition of citizen participation which, I believe, is applicable to tenant participation in public housing. It is from an article in The Journal of the American Institute of Planners by Sherry R. Arnstein*, who was an advisor on citizen participation in HUD. She rejects what she calls euphemisms like "self-help" or "citizen involvement" as carrying

* Sherry R. Arnstein, "A Ladder of Citizen Participation", Journal of the American Institute of Planners, Vol. XXXV (July 1969), pp. 216-224.

sufficient weight. Yet she also rejects what she calls misleading rhetoric like "absolute citizen control", stating that even the President of the United States does not have absolute control.

Arnstein's view is as follows:

Citizen participation is a categorical term for citizen power. It is the redistribution of power that enables the have-not citizens, presently excluded from the political and economic processes, to be deliberately included in the future. It is the strategy by which the have-nots join in determining how information is shared, goals and policies are set, tax resources are allocated, programs are operated, and benefits like contracts and patronage are parceled out. In short, it is the means by which they can induce significant social reform which enables them to share in the benefits of the affluent society.

I am not being the porte-parole* of the management group here but I want to state clearly that I fully endorse this definition.

* Spokesman

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